



## How I Lead in a Mission Presidency | An Interview with Bruce Chang

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Did you know that over 50% of the church membership is single? That's why faith matters in leading saints are joining forces to produce the single saints virtual summit. This online event is focused on helping Latter day Saints more deeply understand the complexities of being a single adult in our faith community. In the summit you'll learn from ten to 15 percenters mostly single adults who share their unique perspectives on how we can better understand the single adult experience and feel more equipped to unite with them in our worship. For more information about the single saints virtual summit and how to register for free, text the word lead to four 747 four 7. Again, text the word LEAD to four 747 four 7, or visit leading saints dot org slash single adults. Leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead. And we do that through various ways, including this very podcast that you're listening to. I hope you subscribe. Maybe you leave this a review while you're at it. And I think you'll enjoy the content you find on this podcast. And then jump on over to leading saints org and you'll find thousands of articles dedicated to leadership context as it relates to being a latter day saint. We have virtual summits that we've done, tricks out on social media and also a weekly newsletter goes out that has unique content you won't find anywhere else. So a jump into the leading saints world. We're glad to have you. All right, I'm coming to you from the jkb building on the campus of Brigham young university in Provo. That's the Jesse knight building. I have no idea who Jesse knight was completely. But my guess probably does, who's Bruce Cheng? Bruce who was Jessie knight? I'm so happy to be here. Thank you for having me on your show. Yeah. Jessie and I was one of the early founders, very important person. Nice. That's all we need to know. Yeah, I threw a song or I threw a curveball at you at the beginning here. But now Bruce you are, you're very well connected to a celebrity, a leading saint celebrity

as I like to tease him about, and that is rob Ferrell, who anybody I've met on the campus here that we're recording this during education week and so I've run into several individuals who are in the leading saints audience. And I say, hey, you know what, what episode was resonating most? They say, oh, it's that YSA stake president. I said, rob Ferrell. He's like, yeah, that's it. And now you, when rob Ferrell was a stake president of a YSA stake, you were his counselor, or one of his counselors. Yeah, I was his first counselor, and we became fast friends. If I may, I want to share a quick experience. Yeah. So my wife and I got this phone call and we were asked if we could go to an appointment. I said, well, who is it for? Or what is it for? Well, we'll tell you when you get there. Oh boy. Yeah. One of those. So we show up and I thought I promise I did not teach any false doctrine. I don't know what general authorities can come. Because you teach in the seminars and institute, that's like your job, right? That's correct. Yeah, that's correct. And so the door opens, and we get escorted in, it Delta cook, along with another man, we did not recognize later we found out it was rob Ferrell. Okay. So this is a mysterious guy. Mysterious guy in the corner. I thought, maybe he's one of those, he's the accuser and the accused, right? So I'm facing this man. And the other cook said, welcome. Tell us who you are and a little bit about yourself. So I looked at my wife and she looked at me and she went first and then I went, introduce ourselves. And when you're with the general authority, you just do more listening than you do talking. So he said, hey, we're thinking about starting a brand new young single dog stake in this area and with a smile, I think he was being humorous.

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He said, jokingly, if we were to start this brand new stake, what do you think will be an average marriage goal that we should have in the state per year? So I looked at my wife actually looked at me with the look that only a wife can give like, hey, you're on your own buddy. And so I thought, well, 25, that's too low a hundred, you're a dreamer, but I've always been taught this by a few of my mentors who said, when you're with mission president, when you're with stick president, will you're with the general authority. Be yourself. Don't stand up and straighten out your tie and be someone you're not. Yeah. Love that. So I said, with all due respect, other cook, I can't think of a number, but I don't think we should quantify the success of January single dogs by a number of marriages. Rather we should focus on helping them become better disciples of Jesus Christ, and if we do that, then hire sacrament attendance and hire temple attendance work will occur. And as a result, two righteous people through the spirit will fall in love and get married. That's the fruit. Of becoming a disciple in the Nodal stake. Then I sat back and I thought, and he was quiet. He just kind of looked at me and I just kind of said, well, that's just my opinion. And he put his hands on my knee and said, well done. Because you can not set goals on infringe upon other people's agencies. So then he said, I need to go do something, I'll be right back. So the man follows him, and I sat there and I looked at my wife, and I said, man, I've done it. I should have said a number. Why didn't I say a number? I should have concur. So he came back about a two minutes later, and he pull his chair forward and he said, brother chain with all the love of my heart, the lord is calling you to serve as a counselor in the newly formed young single dog stake presidency. What you accept. The spirits in the room I looked at my wife again and she was in tears and we both felt a spirit like this is what we're supposed to do.

Obviously, the thought were creep into your mind as all of us do. Shouldn't they call someone that has like gray hair or a little more, you know, establish or empty nesters. So we went for a ride and it's been wonderful. I've learned a lot from my friend Rob Ferrell and all the Janssen adults we get an opportunity to associate with. So you knew nothing of Robert Feral at that point. He knew nothing about you. They were just sort of bringing in various individuals or considering certain people that maybe he didn't know, but that's why he was in the room so he could get a feel for who he was actually calling as his counselor. That's correct. Nice, nice. Now, give me a little bit more about your background because you're an immigrant to the U.S., is that right? That's correct. And I'm here legally, just for the record. My dad's from China and he would have been 96 this year, but he's passed away. So he went to Taiwan and that's when the borders were closed. And he was not allowed to go back home so for 25 years, he wasn't allowed to go back home to see his family. He missed his mom and his dad's funeral. That was very difficult for him. But he was in Taiwan, met my mom, they got married, they have 9 children. I'm the youngest and 9 children. And they felt like every one of their children other have an out of country experience. So everyone let somewhere after high school except for me. So the tender age of 12, my mom sends me, we go to Hawaii, and then later to Washington state and I live with American family. And so your parents are back in Taiwan. Because of Visa issues that can't stay, so I stay and that's where I got baptized as a member of the church. Wow. And did your any of your other family members, every baptized or no, just me? Yeah. Wow. So what was there a moment when you were introduced to the missionaries or how did what was the moment in that conversion experience? All right, I'll tell this quick experience. I have friends I would invite me to go to church and I remember going one time. So we're going to play basketball. And when you were growing up, everyone wanted to be Michael Jordan. So I was like, yeah, how could play. Then we drive up to the church and my first thought was, what are we doing here? Until they open up the double doors and I see this gym. And I said, wow, this is amazing. It's your bishop and the MBA. No, he worked for the bank.

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He doesn't even play basketball. And that was my introduction to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. Wow. And going ever since. And did it take long for walking in that court to walking into the font? Four years, four years ago. So you were 16 at that point? I was 17. Okay. And for a four to 5 years somewhere around there, Miss Neuro started to work with me, and they were very kind very patient. And when they had extend the invitation for me to get baptized, I fell right about it, but they said, oh, you have to call your parents. So I call my parents long distance. Okay, so but I want to make sure during these four years or whatever, you're just living as a foreign exchange type student or dusk with the same family during those years. That's correct. And that family was not Latter day Saints. The mom was like I said, a lot of my friends at school were members of the church and I found something just really unique about them and I just fell in love with them. Okay, so then comes the day, you have to call long distance to Taiwan to get permission from your parents. Yeah. I was scared. I called up, we talk, we make small talk. You can tell that when your children need something, they're really sweet. Yeah. So I call home when I was really sweet and gentle and then I say, hey, I've been going to this American church

and the mobility that they've been really good for me and I made all these friends. All that's nice. Well, think about joining them. Well, what do they mean join them? I said, I'm a good baptist. Absolutely not. We're Buddhists and we don't join the American church. And of course, as in the Chinese culture, you're very obedient to your parents or your honor and respect them. So I said, okay, and I went back and told a missionary so you could tell they were sorely disappointed. Like call again, right? Yeah. But there were respectful. I still went to church, and I felt something missing in my life. And then would come and read the book Mormon with me, and we've got to the point where we read about ammon where he had the courage to talk to the king, and that kind of got to me. And I thought that came to my mind within these ass again. So done that I called long distance and talked to my dad and my mom. And I talked to her for a while and I said, mom, why is it that you and dad won't let me join this church? They don't drink they don't smoke their kind, the respectful. Finally, she said, we just don't want you to forget us and where you came from. I said, our church teach us to if anything else they teach us to be respectful of our family and our ancestors, they really close in line with what I how I was raised. So it helps me to be a better person. She said, well, if that's the case, then, okay. So I told the elders, they were so happy and they said, did you know that, you know, your Friends, us, people in the world that fasting for you? Because we knew that you were going to make this call soon. So that was a blessing. Yeah. And then it got baptized, and that led to a mission. Yes. And we're deserved. California Arcadia mission. Nice. I'm California Sacramento. So we're sort of rivals, but it's all right, you know. And we have Disneyland. What do you guys have? We have a farm fields. And Gourmet. Let me see. We got nothing. So it never such a mission. You just really never look back, right? That really solidified your conviction. Well, there's a side story to that. When I told my parents, when you talk to Chinese parents, they said, what do you hope your children will become? They'll always say, oh, a doctor or an attorney? Because then they can go brag about it with their family and friends, right? And so they said, what's your son going to do? And they don't want to say he wants to go on a mission. So when I told my parents that they just flipped out, and they said, absolutely not. And I said, I feel right right. This is what I need to do. I prayed, I feel like this is what I need to do. It's going to bless my life. So my parents, my dad said, then, you know, we don't need to talk to you. I don't have nothing to say. And so I had a disowning type of feeling. Wow. Yes. Wow. And then what happened from there? So I worked two or three jobs to try to save money for my mission and back then you pay for the exact amount that you owe. So if you go to Mexico and you pay 80 bucks, you're sitting pretty sweet.

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Yeah. But if you go to California somewhere three or four or \$500, and I got to come up with that. Wow. So California, I mean, that's generally more expensive place in the United States, I'd say. Yes. So I want to fast forward to you've earned a PhD and the focus is in organizational leadership. Was that one of the PhD happened and what encouraged you to maybe go into that leadership organizational leadership? Well, Kirk, I've always been fascinated in leadership. And I will watch different people on how they lead and I've listened to your podcast. I've listened to people and I love the questions you ask, and I try to extract their leadership philosophy or their leadership nuggets that I can gain from, as well as watching ted-talks. So I've always been

fascinated, but this came about in an interesting way. After I got married, things kind of became so much more smooth with my family. I think they just fell in love with my wife and it was just a fun experience. Now that we have an interracial marriage and we come home and introduce their daughter in law, this is my daughter in law, from America. And here's a funny type story. When we chose to get married a temple on the satellite temple, I had to make one more difficult phone call . Is more long distance charges that really are difficult calls. The money you can make back, but yeah, those anxieties are there. I felt like all the obstacles that I've had with my family with my parents had to do with the church. Getting baptized, going on the mission, get them into temple. I tell them about my proposal and my marriage. They're so excited. They said, is there a Chinese restaurant there that you can host it or a country club while actually I'm getting married in a temple? Well, how many people can you have, how many people can we bring? Well, mom, that actually, you can't come inside, and there was just a moment of long pause. That I thought I just like, I just kill them softly. And that they, they're just deeply hurt. And that was a long conversation and so my dad said, why would we fly 9000 miles to get to Salt Lake to the Utah just to wait outside our son's own wedding? I'm not coming. Oh, wow. Yeah, that was a difficult moment in my life. Did they keep that promise? My mom softened his heart. Oh, nice. And he came, and I had a good friend who served this mission in Taiwan and other goodness of his heart. Him and his wife rented a limo and picked up my parents and took him to Salt Lake and lined up a sister missionaries. I spoke Chinese and gave them a temple tour. And we went inside and got married and typically were your dad was set, it was someone else, where your mom was said it was someone else. It was sweet to be with my wife to be with her for eternity through the sacred ordinance. But it was difficult because my family wasn't there. So we get done and we get changed we come out and I see my mom standing there. When you come up out of the basement there, she's standing right there. And my friend said, did you know that your mom has been standing there for 40 minutes? Because she did not want to miss her son coming out of the temple. So they ended their tour early. I was so deeply touched and I still love me. Yeah. But they were so happy about the whole experience that my dad invited my wife and I to go to Taiwan in December during Christmas break to have a traditional Chinese wedding. Oh, great. Oh. It gets pretty good. Yeah. So she said, we're going to make a traditional Chinese dress for your wife so they took measurements within two days, they like custom made this silk dress. And then they said we want to bring her another dress because I don't know if they seem Pride and Prejudice. So they went to the dress shop and pull out this big poofy British traditional dress. My wife's like, oh my word, I look like a lamp shade. And I said, hey, when in Rome, right? So now you're in Asia. So she went with a flow and we show up and we stand in front of everyone. There's about 20 tables each table seats about ten to 12 guests into a course meal. So they make lobsters they make 20 lobster plates and they bring them all out. Before that, my dad made a speech, and they made us like bow to heaven bout to them about each other.

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We did it because there was a very it was a custom. So it was a cultural experience, not a religious experience. And then afterward, my dad said, to my amazement, surprise, he said.

Everyone, please excuse my son. And his wife, their Mormons, they don't drink wine, so when you toast them, please don't pour them wine. And I have never thought I would hear the day that my dad would defend my faith. Wow. That was one highlight. So for anyone listening, if you are wondering if that deliverance will ever come, you just hold out faithful and trust in the lord and the time will come where what you want and wish for would be granted. That's all I've ever wanted. Yeah. Yeah, that's awesome. And so did you meet your wife at BYU and no, we were set up on the blind date? Oh, nice. And she was already working. I was working as a seminar teacher. I wasn't married. And we were set up on a blind date and just the awkward 20 questions. What's your favorite food favorite pizza? And do you like Chinese food? Do you like Chinese children? I'm kidding. I didn't ask that. So and then so getting to your gradual work and whatnot, when did that I mean, is that some of the always wanted to do is you're teaching seminary, because I know I've heard you get paid a little bit more, the more advanced degrees you have. Was that maybe the motivation? Well, that is true and pretty much like any educational system, right? Whether it's like a school district or seminars institute, I was really, I felt prompted to do that when I really didn't have much of an interest. So I finished my masters and I and then I got this calling, so I dove right in with rob Ferrell, and you just don't have time to go to school. When you're when you have a calling like that and then we got asked to go to California to be institute directors and coordinator. And I had to just feeling that I should. So I apply, and I got accepted, and I was getting ready to jump in, but my dad got sick that July. So I went to back to visit him. And then that came back and then probably within about three weeks he passed away. And that was at the end of August. So I went back to pay our respects and settle his affairs and that maybe this is story for another day where my wife and I went together to a Buddhist funeral, and everyone's watching us to see what we would do. And we did it in such a respectful manner that they were so impressed. Especially with my wife, who's a foreigner, who is very respectful of the Chinese culture. It was incredible. That's awesome. So I came back, I just wasn't in the mood. And I defer for a year. The next year I jumped into it. And what school was this through? It's called university of Laverne. I thought about USC and apply, but then I realized that you have to mortgage a house to go to school there. And I wasn't willing to do that. Yeah. So for a fraction of the price, I went to university of Laverne to get a doctoral degree in organizational leadership. Nice. Nice. And you know, looking back, like, coming out of organizational leadership, what were some of the principles that maybe you thought was most helpful in serving in leadership? Because you've had other leadership roles since your time in that state pregnancy. Absolutely. And organizational leadership realms. They call it the board meeting or powwow. And the church, we call it council, a measure of a true leader is somebody that's willing to lessen more than he speaks. Because you've heard this quite a bit. If let's say you're a supervisor or your CEO comes in and said, this is our problem, this is why I think we should do. But I want to hear what you guys have to say. Well, nobody in the right mind is going to speak up because you've already established a boundaries. And I've heard this saying before. Sometimes, Native American chiefs, when they have powers, they send a circle, so everyone has an equal privilege to have a voice and the chief will speak last. So that he can hear all of the councils before he makes a final wise decision. And I think that's the essence of leadership when we when we counsel with our counsels, you will actually receive revelation because revelations scatter among us, right? Present ballers have that book, counseling with our counsel.

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He shared. And also, more importantly, we need to hear more from women in our councils. Because they have wisdom that sometimes we don't think about. And we need to ask them for their input and their feedback. Yeah. And obviously, you've had various opportunities both in your professional life to work with youth, you know, in the seminary and institute programs, and then as in YSA state presidency. And that's where I thought maybe we could go with a lot of our discussion is understanding how to connect with you, how to connect, or encourage the youth. You know, this is such a difficult time. It seems. You know, for those testimonies to grow and flourish, right? So where should we begin with as far as understanding youth and helping them progress in the gospel? Absolutely. First of all, I think you need to understand them and understand where they're at and where you like to where do you think the Lord want to take them. And my dissertation, I study millennials as well as Gen Z and now to Holland and seminar in Institutes annual training broadcast, he shares some of the characteristics of Gen Z they've always been exposed pornography, they've been wired to something in the Internet or cell phones or earbuds or Google that post Christians almost a quarter of the Americans adults are nuns. If you believe in God, 52% of the teens do not identify with any religion, only 37% believe in God. So those are astounding statistics that we need to take a look and we need to reach out and teach correct doctrine and allow them to govern themselves. So there's this movement of, you know, when you mentioned nuns, those referring to those individuals who don't have an affiliation with a formal religion. They do, or they leave the faith that their fathers. And they feel like I don't have to have an organized religion in order to have a happy productive life. In fact, Kirk, some of my I've been teaching a BIU this summer as a visiting professor at some of my students had came up to me in conversation, said, I thought about leaving organized religion. And I wasn't surprised, obviously, because I deal with young single adults quite a bit. So you better believe I hung on to the students and have conversations with them often. And in my lessons, I had those individuals in mind because we don't want them to leave. Yeah. Yeah. And is there anything like intentionally do as you teach? Or is it just mainly just pointing them to the doctrines and hopefully teaching them clearly or any tips on maybe how to encourage those youth to not turn into nuns? No religion. I have a couple of things that I would advocate. One is ask don't tell. Sometimes when you have this lesson that you're so thrilled about, like, for example, if a youth leader getting ready to teach Ammon and they'll go, oh, I love this story and emphasized the cutting off arms, maybe bring out a sore and talk about this warrior mentality, and I don't believe that our youth want to hear those things. I think rather we need to ask them if you were there, what do you think Ammon will want you to learn from his experience? Why do you think the lawyer put this story here for us? If we ask them and allow them to analyze it in internalize it for themselves, you and I would be so amazed at the answers they can come up with. I learned from these youth and I learned from these young single adults, they're just brilliant, they're incredible. So ask and don't tell. And number two is, please do not try to change their behavior. Sometimes as parents, we get into this panic mode where we had to push the panic button. And then you think of you think of things like that will give you a quick behavior modification. We're The Church of Jesus Christ. We're not a drive-through church where you're

the food, you get your food and you get out of the room within three minutes. It doesn't work that fast. Right, right? And so I would say that we need to not only teach them correct principles, but we also need to allow them to self discover. I'll give you an example. I've been teaching at BY education with this week this week and one of the moms asked me this question about how do you get your teenagers to listen to pay attention? I said, first of all, they have agency and if we say something and they don't respond immediately or have a behavior modification, that doesn't mean we fail, we need to allow them time to choose to analyze it.

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Well, what would you say? I said, I'll give you an example. Let's say you're a child comes home late from curfew. And what's the very first question we would ask when they come in the door? Where have you been? Where have you been? Why are you late? And they know that you're going to be pulling out your verbal pistol and far away, so they're very careful. They close the door very silently. They see who's awake and see what their parents are in. So you always have a teddy bear parent. So they're praying that if that's a softie that dazs up, then you can just kind of sell your story. And so if we ask them that question, we're almost encouraged them to do what? To avoid you, or be a little dishonest. Oh, yeah, not. So I would advocate that when they come in the door, your first question is, did you have fun tonight? Yeah, right? And this rolls them off, right? They're expecting a lecture. And you don't say that with sarcasm or like, oh, did you have fun? Yeah. Yeah. And you have a baseball bat behind your back. Did you have fun? It's not one of those mafia mentality, right? You genuinely ask them. And then the second question I would advocate is, do you know why we have curfews? And their typical response, because the holy goes, goes to edit. Midnight, whatever curfews. 11 midnight. And I think that's absurd because holy ghost is a personage of spirit. He does not need sleep. So that's not even true doctrine, right? And how many profits do we know in the scriptures to get woken up at three in the morning by the spirit? So obviously, holy ghost doesn't need to sleep. So they'll say that and you say, well, not exactly. Science have proven that the longer you stay up, the more brain cells get killed off, and what you wouldn't do during the daytime, you would do at night. So if your buddies, let's say, for example, hey, let's break into the golf course. Right after school. No, that's ridiculous. I'm not going. Well, all of a sudden at midnight, I said, hey, Joe and John. We're all going to go. And then all of a sudden, you're like, oh, okay. So talking to bishops, they said that sometimes what he found is his youth gets into immoral behaviors usually after dark. So I would say, it's a protect you spiritually, that's why we have a curfew and physically, a lot of patrons are let out of bars. Sometime around curfew. So you're on the road with a bunch of people that have blood alcohol content that's not fit for them to operate a vehicle. So we have curfew because we love you. We want you to come home to us. It's to protect your spiritually and physically. That's why we have it. Yeah. And then you just see their heart just soften and they just melt. And then they immediately say, oh, I'm so sorry. Then you say, now, would you like to tell me where you were? Then there are more opt to be honest. Yeah. Yeah, and you're not, you know, the verbal pistol of an even that's firing their sentence so that you know three weeks grounded or whatever. You won't get me yourself phone. That's right. Yeah. And we do that with the intent to modify behaviors, hopefully, but, you know, sort of that threaten that threat

that does that but approaching it with love and understanding and trying to explain, I met with my 9 year old daughter, oftentimes I'll say like Debbie, this is like my job. God sent you to my house. Any expects me to make sure I teach you these things, right? And so I'm not trying to just be mean or get you in trouble. This is my job, and she's like, I know, dad, you know? So, you know, approaching out in love goes a long way, right? Yeah. And being a parent, it's a very slow, or delay gratification position. Because sometimes they don't appreciate you until they go on a mission, then stick through a 6 months into a you get that I'm sorry letter or I'm thankful letter for doing my laundry, washing my clothes, or like, waited this long, right? The parental payday, right? Yes. Yes, yes. Awesome. And going back to your ass don't tell, I really appreciate this concept because you talk about M and I love to teach the youth, the lesson about ammon because we can talk about arms, getting chopped off and this superhero figure and show the frieberg pitcher of these massive biceps, you know? I'd love to teach that.

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Then you get to the Isaiah lesson you think, how do I make Isaiah cool, you know? But instead, approaching everything with asking, don't worry about telling them anything, but what's a list of questions you can approach the class with. Yeah. And so then they would skip the second knee pies because there's nothing cool about it. But I would also advocate that we lead our children into the scriptures. Lead our youth into the scriptures, and let the scriptures speak to them. I had an experience, and I hope I'm forgiven for this. But we tell our children, you can not be on the computer when mom dad are not home. And they will know that because you might look at things that you shouldn't, so they know that. And one day I was coming home from work, my wife wasn't there. I went to push the remote button on the grass rope and I went open. So I thought, oh, shoot. So I go up to the door. I look through the window and I see one of our child in front of the computer. So whenever you catch your child doing something you're not supposed to, what do you do? What do you typically do? That verbal pistol again, right? You want to help me. Yeah. So the first thing you want to do is ask him, what have you been doing? And if they obviously out of fear, they don't tell the truth and you're like, I saw you through the window. Then you want to take a verbal stick and beat him over the head with it. But that doesn't change anybody's behavior. Is that righteous indignation, right? Like I saw you, you liar. You're right. So I get back in my car and say, a little prayer heavenly father, please help me. If somehow, we can make this into a teaching moment. It would be a tremendous blessing, because we love our children. We just want them to grow up to be connected to Jesus Christ and not keep the commandments because they're afraid of what mom and dad would say or think or do. So I knocked on the door and I stepped back and our child opened the door. Hi, dad, what are you doing? Let's go open. Can you open it for me? Sure. And I pulled the car in. And I said, how are things going? Did you have a good day? Yeah. I said, hey, I've been breathing something in the scriptures. Can I share with you? Will you go grab your scripts or sure? So they grab their scriptures. This is a life as a child of the seminaries teacher, right? And we all should do it, but anyways, or ready to go. You ready to teach? You could say this is a life of a podcast. Host father, or car mechanic, like anyone could pick this up and do this. Yes, yes. So we went through and I talked about heavenly father's plan and most of the steps before, you

have to teach age appropriate. So you don't sit there and give a half an hour lecture if your child was like 8 or 9 or ten or 11. So I go as long as their age. Just make sure that I don't overkill this experience. So if they're ten, you go ten minutes, type thing . Yeah. And so then we go to Moses chapter four verse four, because Lucifer was not chosen to lead us plan, the plan of happiness, he became angry. In the description says he became the father of all lies, to try to deceive and blind men. And I said, they feel the father of something. What does that mean? 'cause I don't know. If you're the father, who's the father of aviation, I don't know. Who's the father of Apple? Steve Jobs. We're in trouble here. Our history needs to be taught a little bit better. And so I said, if your father or something, you created it, it's who you are. So could we say that if we're more loving and kind, we become more like Jesus Christ. And honest, but if we are mean and rude and we are dishonest, we become more like the father of all lies, who is the I said the father of, he goes all lies, which is the devil. And at this moment, I wish I could say I wanted to say to this child. I'm so glad you don't lie to me and then walk away. The temptation was there, but I didn't take the shot. So I said to this child, thank you for allowing me to have this conversation. And I got up to change, and I could just see his child's mind just goes and something clicks, his eyes gets big and he goes, that can I share something, yeah.

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Actually, I was on the computer when you weren't home before you got home. And I just wanted to melt and just hug this child. Because you see that the holy ghost is working in him. And I just hugged his child and said, it's okay. I'm just so glad that you can be honest. And let's just pinky swear that we'll always be honest with each other no matter what. And he's like, I'm so sorry. I was watching Venus and verb or some Disney thing. And you're like, oh. Yeah. But but I've never forgotten that experience. And for anyone that's listening out there, I wish that sharing the scripture will yield such fruit in such an accelerated pace. It doesn't always work that way, but you're planning seeds. And one day it will grow and be fruitful and you'll be glad you did. Yeah. Yeah, and you know, under the topic of reaching youth, like you said, it's not something that there's a secret tactic that if you just do a B and C, then you'll reach them. Like, is this constant nurturing and planning seeds and not resulting in or not reacting with anger and some of these circumstances? Absolutely absolutely. So you've had opportunity to serve in the mission presidency in what mission was it? Well, interestingly enough, when we got asked to take this position with similar to Institutes, it was actually in my mission. Oh, that's cool. So I lived in the mission that I had served as a young man. And you're excited about that, I bet. I didn't know what to think. But I was grateful because we felt the spirit that this was where we're supposed to go. Nice. And was it another phone call like that state called that you just get a random call and suddenly you're being called into an office? It was less dramatic than that. I get this phone call and they offer the position. And I was thinking of the position as an institute director. Yeah, okay. I said, so were there not enough people that apply or? Because I'm thinking, are they scraping the bottom of the barrel? And he's like, well, contrary, there's actually quite a large number of people that wanted to, but we felt like you would be a good fit. So I went and probably within two months, I get called in. And I was asked to serve in the mission presidency. Again, to my surprise, I thought shouldn't there be some older gentleman with gray hair more distinguished

and here I am. So I'm curious who calls a member of a mission pregnancy? Is it the mission president? Or the mission president gets permission from the state president? And then he was the one that called me. The state, your state president. The mission president of the Mississippi. He called you. One day you just have this appointment with a mission president. And he extends the call. Well, I work a lot with the mission missionaries. So for him to ask me with me because we were doing some type of open house at my institute and it was supposed to be a missionary effort where we invite people on campus to come over to check out our institute and we have some displays of our church and our beliefs and we will morph that into a missionary effort. So I thought he was coming to talk about that. Oh, nice. You didn't even see it coming. Actually, I didn't. Yeah. Nice. And that was so you served with that for three years and it was almost that time. I lose track of time. Yeah. But it was a good amount of time that you had some great experiences. So I'm incredible experiences. So my first experience was an interview of a man who's been incarcerated. And typically, when you want to get baptized, the district leader or zone leader come and do the baptismal interview to make sure you understand the doctrine where you're committed to do. And so on and so forth, do you have any other questions or issues? You don't want us to surface. After they get baptized, right? But if you get to certain issues such as incarceration, probation, abortion, or if they're from a country where the church isn't recognized, then that's where members the mission presidency comes in to do the interview. So I go in and it was in kind of a shady part of town and the greater Los Angeles County. Even Sacramento has those shady parts. So obviously coming from we had lived in Utah coming from Utah. I thought, okay, maybe I should run real fast from the parking lot to because on the side where I parked it was a little bit darker. And I didn't know where missionaries were and when I saw someone coming out of the building I thought, I'm going to run in.

00:45:04 - 00:50:05

And I don't see the elders, but I saw this man. He had this like really big oversized white shirt. And they'll tie button up and long baggy pants. And I can see little bit tattoo up his neck and I kind of smile him smiling. And I said, oh, you're here meeting someone, he goes, yeah, I'm here. For my baptismal interview, I said, oh, that's with me. Then the elders came in. President, I'm so sorry. We're waiting for you on the other side. And I thought, man, I almost got kidnapped. You didn't wait for me on the right side. So we go ahead and interview and this man was so humble and salt teachable and his story was didn't know his dad, his mom, passed away. So when he turned 18, he left this phospho family situation and got involved with the wrong crowd and he was escaping from the law enforcement officers and got into an accident and unfortunately became someone who was responsible for a vehicular manslaughter. Oh, well, with the car. And so he went to jail. And over time, because of good behavior. He was allowed to have a little more freedom. Well, he's in jail. And Sunday, they said anyone that wants to go to church. You're welcome to. So Catholics down this hall, protestants, methodists, Jewish, the Latter day Saints. And so he kind of got LA and I think he might have I can't remember the story, but I think he went into the wrong door and the door shut and he saw a copy of the book worm and he said, this is not my church. But you're not allowed to leave after you go in for security purposes.

So he's there. And he sat there and he said that this sweet grandma lady came and opened up to him book and he did not want to look at it, but the worst of the page like came to his eyes fell up on the page and said, leave me gumi walk beside me, help me find the way. So you're familiar with him and it spoke to him. So he continued to go back and he was learning all these things. And this sweet sister said, when you get out, will you please find our church? And talk to the missionaries. He said I will. So he gets out and walked into the church building, sees the elders, he said, hi, my name is son so, and I want to be baptizing the church. This is like one of those like Leona moment. So the elders kind of looked at each other and they said, for reals? Yes. Well, we can help you with asshole they teach him and they get to this point and this is where I come in. So I said, tell me, do you have any issues with church or church attendance? He's like, yeah, and I thought, oh, shoot. He said. I don't drive, so I get on the bus, and if there's more people I get on, the bus routes makes me like 5 minutes late for church, and I feel really bad. And I'm thinking, are you kidding me? Do you know those times with drag or kids with Cheerios falling out the back, leaving a trail into the chapel? And he's 5 minutes late and I'm like, I think God would understand. How about the scriptures? Do you love the book Mormon? Yeah, who's your favorite character? NI fi. So you like how he built a boat and I was talking about nifa that met Jesus when they came. I thought, well, how much of the book Mormon have you read? He said all of it. And the doctrine covenants. And the pearl gray price, and I thought, wow, he said the Bible is a little bit hard. I'm working on it. I said, you're a fast reader. He goes, well, I had a lot of time in prison. So this happens. And he goes through and he's just sweet and I felt the spirit very humble. And at the end of our interview, I said my friend had good news and bad news. The good news is you meet the fruits of baptism. I feel good about signing off that you should be baptized. But the not so good news is, because you're on probation, we have to write a letter seeking for permission from the first presidency and give you permission to get baptized. So how long does that take? I said, I don't know. It could be four weeks, 6 weeks. I just don't know. He goes, well, I've waited this long. I can wait. Try to hug them and came out went on our way. He went on his way and the elders always look at you afterwards like, well, well, and they say, well, I'm going to turn this report into the mission president, get his approval, and we're going to send out this letter to get approval so he can be baptized, because I feel like he meets the fruits of baptism.

00:50:06 - 00:55:04

They say, yay, well, how long's that going to take? I don't know four to 6 weeks, maybe 8. So one elder said, also, maybe like one transfer. They tell time by remember those days, yes. The other elder kind of hung his head. And I say elder, what's wrong? Well, he wanted me to baptize him, but I'm going home. In less than a month, I said, could you come back? Financially, it's just not possible for our family. I'm so sorry, but I'm trying to think of all the right things to say all I FaceTime you in. I'll you count this as your baptism, the lord, please with you and he understood. So I went home rather right away, president approved. I send it off. Every week they would text me or call me. President Chang, how are you? Fine. I said, I know you didn't call me to talk about the weather. So, I'm sorry, I didn't get the letter. I'm sorry, I didn't get so going to throw a week. I didn't get the letter. So he's given up hope, right? And if it's felt so bad, I pray, I'll

have my father. There's a way, please get that letter. So by Thursday, of the third week, I get the letter that they approved for him to get baptized. They just can't receive the priesthood or go to the temple that the end of his probation. With his pearl officer, tell he's out of parole. So this is grace. So I think Friday I call them, they say, hey, how's it going? And I say, hey, elder, just wondering what are you packing ready to go? I know you're leaving soon. Yeah, next week I'm leaving and going home. Well, I just want to tell you thank you for serving one of our mission and show love you. And I got a letter and he got a putti be good to get that ties. Goodbye. And I held a phone. They're like, hello, hello. I'm like, I'm just kidding. I'm still here. Oh, don't do this to us. I said, congratulations. Said president, we're doing the happy dance right now. So they planned a baptism. He gets baptized on Saturday, gets confirmed on Sunday. The cells are packed with bags on Monday, he goes home on Tuesday. Oh, wow. Wow, that's awesome. And he got the participate, just like his last baptism. And I love missionary work Kirk. I love working with a full-time missionaries. And that was one highlight. So over those years serving that mission presidency, what did you learn as far as encouraging missionaries? Maybe we could better prepare missionaries, anything like that. Thank you for asking that question. Obviously, prior to going out, I serve with Raphael in the jansky about state presidency. And I was floored the first time I've heard that somewhere about one fourth or one third of our return missionaries at one time going active. And I thought, how can they go inactive? You watch called the serve, you see the music videos. They're baptizing people and they come they come and run across that banner. Everyone's got cowbells at Salt Lake international airport. They were out serving as missionaries. Then when I went out as and served with the missionaries close up I realized that my opinion is there's some things I think we could improve upon because we focus so much on baptism, but that's the fruit. That's the result of conversion. Rather, I think we need to focus on conversion so that the missionaries don't go out work like they're scared or they're terrified that they're not going to meet their goals. This is what I call control the controllables. It goes back to what else cook said to me, you can't set goals on the fridge upon other people's agencies. So if you say this month, I want to baptize four people. That means that you have to get four people to exercise their agency in your favor in order for you to be successful. If we measure our words as missionaries as a successful missionary by numbers, then how are you ever going to be successful? Because you can't control that. That control's taken from you, so I call it, we need to control the controllables. Why not say every week, my goal is I'm going to talk to 25 new people when we visit church members. We're going to leave them with a message in the prayer with an invitation for them to invite a non member to come have an activity at your home. We could pray for them and we could do follow up. And those are the things that we can control. You can set goals on those and really zone in on them. You can set goals on baptisms, but they should be tucked away in the back of your mind and not be your driving force on why you're working as a missionary.

00:55:06 - 01:00:08

And was that a big focus or effort in the context of the mission? In every mission. In every mission, that that's their focus. And in some missions they even some areas they even rank. Number of baptism by mission, and some of those are emailed out in the mission presidents.

How would you like to be number 34 or 34? Yeah, yeah, not encouraging for sure. No, sure. It's not easy. And the other thing I want to add to is how as parents we can help support our full-time missionaries. Sometimes as parents, we really want to that that day would say, well, how many people did you baptize or are you gonna be a district leader or STL? So sometimes parents focus on extremity rewards like the outward reward and so now I hope son, the missionaries, they feel like, yeah, I should be training. I should be this weekly. There should be its own leader. And if I'm lucky I'll be an AP or STL, that puts a lot of stress and pressure on them, especially if the mission president and any mission would say, if you want to be a leader in this mission, you will baptize. So what are they doing? They're going out, baptizing anybody that would say yes to them instead of going through the conversion process. So that makes me nervous. And I would always when I teach an education week I counsel parents by saying, as the following questions instead, tell me a spiritual experience you've had. Tell me who you're working with that our families can help pray for and fast for. Can you tell me this week, if you've seen a hand of God in your life? The other thing I want to emphasize is this sometimes parents would say. Do you get along with your companion? While nobody gets along with everyone, all of the time, right? Right. Is there some things that bother us take too long of a shower or they cut into your portion of the lesson and or they don't talk or they don't eat the food you like? So when we ask that, it's almost an invitation for our children to grab to us, right? So instead you would say, what have you learned from your companion? What is a Christ like attribute that you like about your companion? When was the last time you served your companion? Can you tell me the time when you two have become more unified? You felt like you were one, or do you witness a miracle together? The knowledge the difference in our verbiage, we can really help and support our missionaries. So they see the value of personal conversion and loving those whom the lord has entrusted in their care as opposed to, I need to hit numbers. I need to hit these leadership positions. These are not boardrooms with stockholders. Yeah. We're talking about people's Salvation. Yeah. And one thing just occurred to me as you talk about these effective questions just because I haven't been a missionary parent yet. But now that there's these weekly calls home through zoom or whatever, when we were out, we write a letter home and they read it and they hear experiences, but there's not this back and forth as much, and so to be prepared with some really good questions as that weekly Zoom call comes around rather than say, oh, are you getting along with your companion? Rather say, you know, yeah, and you definitely don't say, hey, guess what? We're going to Lake Powell next week. I'm so excited. Yeah. Yeah. Focus on the work in the spirituality. Exactly. And those calls, they don't have to be long. They don't. Some mission presence that I've heard. They're very wise they said, you know, you have from this time to this time and just be wise and respectful of your companions time. If your companion is ready to go and you're talking, so be considered and kind, but they don't set a minimum or maximum amount of limits because they know that family diamond that dynamics are different. If you have a step dad and stepmom, essentially talking to two sets of parents, right? And if you have a less active, uncle or grandpa, then you gotta add that in there. Yeah. Yeah. So just to be really intentional with some of those conversations. So before we wrap up, you know, I have a few repet questions, but what are we missing? Any point or principle? A couple things, and if you permit me to share a quick experience if it's okay, afterwards. If I had a magic wand, I would wish that our full-time missionaries would have the opportunity to take institute while they're on their missions.

01:00:09 - 01:05:19

And I'll explain why, during the pandemic, they were all quarantined. They can't go anywhere. So I talked to a mission president about the possibilities of teaching institute on Zoom once a week. I'll hit up 50 minutes. It's on the book of Mormon, something that they can use and be relevant in their work, but also I think your witnessing good teaching and having a spiritual experience. Because let's say on one o'clock on a Wednesday, there's not a lot of people you can teach. People are at work, but yet they can get a spiritual experience in. So we did that all through quarantine. And those who are some of the highlights, you got to remember some of these young mentees came out at age of 18, they never attended institute. So they don't know what it is, but several of them have said, why would they change up game the testimony of institute? I realized how much I need this in my life. When I go home, I'm definitely going to sign up for institute. So number one, I think they should they should take institute. In fact, I will go as far as saying they should help team teach institute. If you want to help convert these young missionaries, what do you do? You get them teaching. When they get depressed or having a hard time, it's because they're not busy engaged, they're not teaching. And number two, I wish there was time maybe every zone conference or on a quarterly basis. Allow them to take a self reliance course, goal setting, mental health, education, things that they need, right? I work with some missionaries I had had struggle with mental health with whether it's anxieties or depression. And there's a mission counselor that they can go see. And I will tell them often that don't worry about stigma. I think it's a great thing, even if you feel like I'm fine, go and visit for half an hour with a mission counselor and just check in. And just make sure that you're doing good, you're on track. And those that get it, that go and have that opportunity. There is provided for them, they maintain their mental health and their mental age, edge, and I really really love seeing that. And typically is that a call of the mission president or yeah, they will counsel with a mission president to get permission and then they can do maybe something deployment and go do that. Oh, that's awesome. I love that. Anything else we're missing? Yeah. I tell you these missionaries, they're faithful. They're loyal to their hardworking, and when they see their fruits that are labors to conversion leads to an act, an active faith, whether it's a youth going to repent to the bishop or if someone said, I want to get baptized, or I want to go through the temple. I want to go on the mission. When you go through two conversion, it's an act of faith. Here's one more thing I want to add that I've learned that we focus on repentance by repentance isn't the key. It's not the main dish. It's fatal Jesus Christ. Placing Jesus Christ leads to repentance or change of heart. So if we focus on faith in Jesus Christ, then everything else will really fall into place. Yeah, I love that. So good. So as you reflect back on your time, you know, serving in various leadership roles. How is being a leader helped to become a better follower of Jesus Christ? That's a great question. And I've heard this in your podcast. I know it's time. And I love it. And I remember listening to your podcast and I thought, man, if I were asked that question, what would I say? I've never thought that I would make it on your show. So has come. What a treat for me. Thank you. Being a leader, it could be a lonely place, and I think you benefit chef, you know what it's like. And then all of a sudden, we put ourselves in the leader's shoes. We realized that maybe I need to complain a little bit less and support a lot more. So being a leader

got me on the other side of the street and helped me to realize that it's not glamorous. It's not fun and nobody likes you a 100% of the time. And we need to be supported to be a better follower. I think the perfect example was Jesus Christ. He's a perfect leader because he was the perfect follower. Many times in the scriptures he would say I do what I see my father do with or do my father's will. He was a follower that's what makes him a great leader. So the essence of leadership is to be an exceptional follower. And that concludes this how I lead, interview, I hope you enjoyed it, and I would ask you, could you take a minute and drop this link in an email on social media in a text? Wherever it makes most sense and share it with somebody who could relate to this experience.

01:05:20 - 01:07:00

And this is how we develop as leaders just hearing what the other guys doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting for your area and that's where great leaderships discovered, right? So we would love to have you, share this with somebody in this calling or a related calling, and that would be great, and also if you know somebody, any type of leader who would be a fantastic guest on how I lead segment, reach out to us go to leading saints that orig slash contact maybe send this individual email letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for this interview. We'll reach out to them, and see if we can line them up. So again, go to leading saints dot org slash contact and there you can submit all the information and let us know. And maybe they will be on a feature how I lead segment on the leading saints podcast. And for more information about the single saints virtual summit, text the word lead to four 747 four 7 or visit leading saints dot org slash single adults. It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the declaration was made, concerning the own and only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink or run away. And of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.